

# New Castle County Resident is First Flu-Related Death of the 2015-2016 Season

**DOVER** – Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) is reporting the first flu-related death of the 2015-2016 flu season. The individual is an 88-year-old man from New Castle County who died on March 14, 2016. The Delaware Public Health Laboratory confirmed that he was infected with influenza A. The gentleman also had underlying health conditions.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family at this difficult time for them," said Dr. Karyl Rattay, DPH director. "This is an important reminder of how serious the flu can be, particularly among vulnerable populations like the very young, people with underlying conditions, and seniors."

There are a total of 828 lab-confirmed cases for the current flu season in Delaware. In the 2014-2015 flu season, there were a total of 2,390 confirmed flu cases in Delaware, with 28 flu-related deaths.

The news of the state's first flu-related fatality comes on the heels of DPH announcing a late, but significant increase in flu activity throughout Delaware. For the week ending March 12, there were 411 flu cases confirmed. The week before that number was 197.

Public Health officials encourage anyone, 6 months of age and older, who has not yet been vaccinated against the flu to do so as soon as possible. DPH continues to offer the vaccine at four of the State Service Centers. Information for these sites can be found at [dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/fluclinics.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/fluclinics.html). Additionally, the vaccine is available through medical providers, pharmacies, and some grocery stores.

Flu vaccination reduces the risk of getting sick from the flu or spreading the disease to others. Delawareans are encouraged to prevent infection by taking simple everyday measures such as washing hands, using hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes and staying at home when sick. These efforts help stop the spread of respiratory illnesses including flu.

For more information on influenza prevention, diagnosis and treatment, call the Division of Public Health at 888-282-8672 or visit [flu.delaware.gov](http://flu.delaware.gov).

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit [delawarerelay.com](http://delawarerelay.com). Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.